

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application.

Claims 1 and 3-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima in view of Andaashu.

Amended claim 1 recites:

“a display unit which displays a preview image generated by combining the base image and the mask image based on the mask image data read by the reading unit on a display, wherein the displayed preview image shows the image pickup area on the base image such that the base image surrounds the displayed image pickup area, and wherein subsequent to displaying the preview image, the display unit displays the composite image showing the combination object image as a through image on the base image and located within the image pickup area.”

A preview image is displayed. The displayed preview image shows an image pickup area on a base image, with the base image surrounding the image pickup area. Subsequently, a composite image is displayed showing the combination object image (e.g., a picked up image) as a through image on the base image, and located within the image pickup area. Such a system can allow a user to view the preview image and approve the placement of the image pickup area on a base image before the combination object image is picked up and displayed in the image pickup area.

The Office action cites Iijima at Fig. 20C for teaching a preview image. The image of a person in Fig. 20A is cited for a base image, and a mask pattern is shown in Fig. 20B. In Fig

20C, the star-shaped mask is superposed on the base image. The base image appears through the mask.

Assume, *arguendo*, that the dotted portion around the mask in Fig. 20C corresponds to “the image pickup area on the base image,” as recited in claim 1. The base image (i.e., image of a person) appears through the star-shaped mask in Fig. 20C, and does not surround the dotted image pickup area. A requirement of the claimed preview image is that the base image surrounds the displayed image pickup area. This feature is not shown in Fig. 20C.

Claim 1 further requires that a composite image be displayed. The composite image shows the combination object image as a through image on the base image. In addition, Claim 1 recites, “the combination object image to be combined with the base image on the base image” (emphasis added). Fig. 20E of Iijima is cited for a composite image, with the image of the car being cited for a combination object image. The caption in Fig. 20E clearly states that the cut-out image (i.e., the image of the person cited for a base image) is positioned on another image (i.e., the image of the car) and can be moved to a desired position on the image of the car. Unquestionably, in Fig. 20E, the “base image” of the person is shown on the “combination object image” of the car. This is contrary to claim 1, which requires that the combination object image be shown as a through image on the base image.

To summarize, the claimed display displays a preview image showing an image pickup area surrounded by a base image, and subsequently a combination object image within the image pickup area on the base image. This can allow a user to view the preview image and approve the placement of the image pickup area on a base image before the combination object image is picked up and displayed on the base image within said image pickup area. Further, the combination object image is displayed through the base image. This system is opposite to the

teaching in Iijima Fig. 20A-20E, in which a portion of a “base image” is cut out and placed atop a “combination object image.”

The deficiencies of Iijima, discussed above, are not corrected by Andaashu. In view of the differences between the cited combination of references and claim 1, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over said combination. Claims 3-7 depend from claim 1.

Amended claim 3 recites:

“wherein the plurality of types of mask image data recorded in the mask image data record section include the mask image data representing a plurality of types of mask images corresponding to the base image;

wherein the display unit one at a time sequentially displays on the base image the plurality of types of mask images corresponding to the base image, and each of the sequentially displayed mask images is displayed with the base image until its corresponding combination object image is picked-up and held, and each of the sequentially displayed mask images is one at a time sequentially displayed with the base image and all previously picked-up and held combination object images that correspond to one of the sequentially displayed mask images.”

The subject matter of claim 3 requires mask image data representing a plurality of types of mask images. An example of such mask image data is shown in Fig. 3, Screen 2, which includes four mask images arranged on a base image in a diamond pattern. The four mask images of Fig. 3, Screen 2 are managed as mask image data of one type representing all four mask images.

The subject matter of claim 3 further requires one at a time sequentially displaying the mask images on the base image. An example of sequentially displaying the mask images is

shown in Fig. 3, screens 4-7. Each mask image is displayed on the base image until its corresponding combination object image is picked-up and held. The picked-up and held combination object images are displayed with the base image and the next mask image in the sequence of sequentially displayed mask images. In Fig. 3, the four example picked-up combination object images, which respectively correspond to the four mask images, are images of a user's wife, the user, the user's father, and a pet dog. See application page 15, lines 19-22. Each of the combination object images is combined with the base image and a composite image is recorded. An example of such a composite image is shown in Fig. 3, Screen 8, which is formed from a base image and the four combination object images.

Iijima teaches combining a mask pattern and a through-image to obtain a cut-out image (18:42-46) and combining a cut-out image and a through-image to synthesize a new image (19:58-65). Andaashu teaches a mobile radio having an image pick-up function and which can generate a composite image (see Abstract). However, neither of the cited references teach mask image data representing a plurality of types of mask images and each mask image is one at a time sequentially displayed on the base image and all previously picked-up and held combination object images that correspond to one of said sequentially displayed mask images.

An advantage of the subject matter of claim 3 is the ease it provides in creating composite images that are made up of picked-up images of differently sized subjects. See, e.g., application page 6, lines 4-8. Each sequentially displayed mask image allows a user to set different image pickup conditions, such as a zoom setting, and different image pickup conditions can be given to each combination object image. As each mask image sequentially appears, a new subject can be photographed, and each new subject can have a completely different physical size and, therefore, need a different zoom setting. Moreover, each mask image is displayed in sequence, and with

previously picked-up combination object images, which makes the creation of composite images very convenient for the user.

In view of the differences between the cited combination of references and claim 3, applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is allowable over said combination. Claims 4-7 depend from claim 3.

New claim 8 has been added, which depends from claim 3. Claim 8 requires that the sequentially displayed mask images are automatically one at a time sequentially displayed. Each subsequent mask image automatically appears, so that a new subject can be conveniently photographed. This feature is not disclosed by the cited combination of references.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No.: NGB-38036.

Respectfully submitted,
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